

# LEARNING CURVE

Northeast  
community college  
Norfolk, Nebraska

## Assessment Newsletter

December 2006

Volume 18

### Tis The Season to be Jolly!

Ho Ho Ho! Merry Christmas! We have a lot to celebrate this season: a successful focused visit and another semester of working together to accomplish learning objectives. During the past four months, 44,250.5 credit hours of instruction impacted the lives of 5270 Northeast students. We know that impact is significant when we measure student learning, and use results to make improvements. As we wrap up this final semester of 2006, we look forward to what 2007 holds in store. This issue of the *Learning Curve* is designed to help you prepare for next semester's assessment initiatives. Have a wonderful holiday season, and come back in 2007, ready to measure learning! ~Corinne Morris~



**Together we assess and achieve measurable outcomes—a win for us all!**



### Making a List- Checking it Twice: Course Assessment

Implementing course assessment is the next step as identified in our *Institutional Master Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning*. Every transfer program that is not currently conducting program assessment is expected to implement a measurement strategy and submit a report by the spring semester of 2008. Basically, what that means is this: a plan needs to be developed by the end of this academic year, so it can be implemented next year. Each of the following transfer programs is expected to measure student-learning outcomes for at least one course within the program of study.

Art  
Behavioral Science  
Biology  
Chemistry  
Criminal Justice  
Education

English  
Health, Physical Education & Recreation  
Music  
Mathematics  
Journalism  
Library Technical Assistant

Pre-Engineering  
Radiologic Technology  
Surgical Technology  
Social Science  
Speech  
Theatre

In order to assist you in the planning of course assessment, a handout of suggestions is attached to this *Learning Curve*. Please feel free to contact Corinne at any time with questions or concerns in regard to developing your course assessment plans: Cox AC 111A, 402-844-7361, or [corinne@northeastcollege.com](mailto:corinne@northeastcollege.com)

### Santa says: "Mark Your Calendars- Assessment Day 3-27-07"

Last year Northeast administered the CAAP exam during regular class-time hours on a particular day. The process worked remarkably well to provide us with data from a representative sample. Therefore, we have adopted an annual assessment day as standard procedure. Tuesday, March 27, 2007 has been designated as a college-wide assessment day for this academic year. On that day, the FACS teams will be conducting in-house measurements of student learning. Satisfaction surveys will also be administered. **Class times that will be affected are 9:35, 11:00 and one hour of the evening classes.** Students will report to the Lifelong Learning Center that day instead of reporting to class; however, their attendance grades for their classes should reflect their participation or absence for the assessment activities. Instructors will be provided with more specific details in January. For now, **if you are scheduled to teach a TR 9:35, 11:00 or evening class, please note March 27<sup>th</sup> as assessment activities on your syllabus.**



## Santa's Workshop: Assessment Class



Next spring may be a good time for you to brush up on your assessment skills. EDUC 1990 *Assessment of Student Learning* is designed to assist instructors in developing assessment strategies that improve teaching and learning outcomes. In this course, you will survey best practices of assessment at the community college level. This 8-week class will meet on Thursdays at 4:00 – 5:40 beginning the 8<sup>th</sup> of January. Credit gained for taking the class can also be applied to job-upgrading. Remember to complete the proper paperwork, with your supervisor's signature prior to registering for the class.



## Santa's Helper: Dear Annie

Dear Annie,

I'm the only instructor that teaches only one section of a course each semester. However, I think it is the best course to begin doing course assessment for our program of study. Can we use this course for course assessment and if so, how?

~Low in Numbers~

Dear Low in Numbers,

Yes, you can use this course, but you will need to use at least two semester's worth of data. Three semesters would be even better. For example, if you're using a final exam to measure student-learning of course objectives, simply save the test results from the first semester and combine them with results from the second semester. When you conduct the item analysis, you will be looking for trends between the classes. If your results are inconclusive, add another year's results and conduct another analysis.

~Annie~

Is there something you need to know about assessment? Annie will try to help. No need to reveal your identity, questions can be submitted anonymously at:

<http://www.northeastcollege.com/AN/Assessment/index.php>






## Party After Christmas: You're Invited!



We will be celebrating our successful Assessment Visit with a Bowling Party: **Friday, January 19 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at Kings Bowling Alley, 1000 Riverside Blvd.** The college will provide soft drinks and pizza. Offices will be closed from 4:00 to 5:00 pm so that everyone can attend. Hope to see you there!!

~Bill Path~

## And I Heard Him Exclaim as he Drove out of Sight, "Here are Some 2006 Assessment Highlights"

-  Vice President Sarah Dempsey joined us. In just a few short months she has inspired us and provided outstanding leadership and support for our assessment efforts.
-  All five FACS teams conducted formal measurements and reported on student-learning.
-  All technical programs conducted assessment and submitted reports. Many of our technical students achieved high scores on national boards/exams.
-  Northeast students scored at or near the national norm for all five CAAP exams that were administered. (Reading, Writing, Math, Critical thinking and Writing Essay) The top students scored above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile for each of the five exams.
-  NECC received full approval from Higher Learning Commission evaluators during the Focused Visit. HURRAH!!!!!!!!!!!!



# **Steps for Implementing Course Assessment**

## **Step One -- Initial discussion:**

Find the page in the NECC college catalog that identifies your area's suggested program of study. As a department, discuss the courses listed and their basic learning objectives. Share suggestions for specific areas where learning could be improved. Examples of rationale for selecting particular courses to assess are:

- A course teaches the foundational skills necessary to succeed within the program thus serving as the best place to start assessing learning.
- There is one particular course that is taught by several instructors and the department wants to check for uniformity in learning outcomes.
- There has been a noticeable deficiency in students' knowledge or performance lately and one course's objectives address those particular competencies.
- Instructors have a "gut feeling" that something needs to be done to improve learning outcomes in a certain area.

## **Step Two – Select course and discuss objectives as well as possible measurement strategies.**

Based on the initial discussion, select a course to begin assessing outcomes. Examine the course's objectives as identified on the syllabus. You will need to determine how many of the objectives can be reasonably measured during the first assessment cycle. Therefore, you will also need to discuss possible measurement strategies. For example:

- A comprehensive final exam could provide data for students' knowledge for all of the course objectives.
- One of the course's general objectives has to do with the mastery of a complicated skill. The measurement strategy could be a hands-on demonstration at the end of the class scored by a rubric developed by the department. The rubric would include several specific objectives that indicate mastery of the general competency.
- Course objectives are identified as Cognitive, Attitudinal or Behavioral. The cognitive objectives could be measured with tests, the attitudinal with a survey and the behavioral with a demonstration.

## **Step Three – Record plan on matrix**

Based on the discussion in step two, select objective/s and devise a method to measure outcomes. Also, decide what your expected outcomes should be. Record the objectives, the measurement strategy and the expected outcomes in the first three columns of the NECC standardized matrix. A copy of the matrix can be found on the website:

[http://www.northeastcollege.com/AN/Assessment/DOC/06\\_standardized\\_matrix.doc](http://www.northeastcollege.com/AN/Assessment/DOC/06_standardized_matrix.doc)

## **Step Four – Implement the plan**

All instructors involved in the measurement strategy need to follow through with the instruction and the collection of data.

## **Step Five – Analyze the results and recommend action**

When all artifacts have been collected, evaluators need to analyze the results, and recommend actions to improve learning.

## **Step Six – Make changes to improve learning**

All instructors involved in teaching the course will follow through with recommended actions.

Note: Examples of course assessment plans are available on the NECC assessment web page

## **Quick List of Assessment Measurement Strategies**

- Standardized Tests
- Locally Developed Tests
- Essays
- Research Papers
- Worksheets
- Video-taped Presentations
- Live Presentations
- Class Projects
- Portfolios
- Demonstrations
- In-class Activities
- One page Papers or Responses
- Checklists
- Surveys
- Focus Groups
- Service Projects
- Evaluations (peer or supervisor)